



County of San Diego

MARK WARDLAW
DIRECTOR
PHONE (858) 694-2962
FAX (858) 694-2555

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
5510 OVERLAND AVENUE, SUITE 310, SAN DIEGO, CA 92123
www.sdcountry.ca.gov/pds

DARREN GRETLER
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
PHONE (858) 694-2962
FAX (858) 694-2555

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Julie Saare-Edmonds
Senior Environmental Scientist
Landscape & Green Building Programs
Water Use and Efficiency
Department of Water Resources
PO Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Via E-mail: julie.saare-edmonds@water.ca.gov

COMMENTS ON THE INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL PANEL (ITP) ON DEMAND MANAGEMENT MEASURES – PUBLIC DRAFT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION 8.2

Dear Ms. Saare-Edmonds:

The County of San Diego (County) has reviewed the Independent Technical Panel (ITP) on Demand Management Measures – Public Draft Report dated February 13, 2016 as well as the updated Recommendation 8.2 of this report dated February 15, 2016. The County supports the need for sustainable landscapes and the efficient use of water.

The County seeks assurance that all of the ITP proposed Recommendations (Recommendations) be fully coordinated with each other and other state laws and programs. Turf replacement efforts should be aligned with requirements for low-water use planting as described in the Prescriptive Compliance Option of the current Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) regulations. Coordination with existing programs in place, such as the California Friendly Landscape Training Program should be utilized in providing existing and new single-family residences with guidance on designing and installing their landscapes. Municipalities should be credited with approaches currently in place, or planned for in the future, to manage outdoor water use locally that will be considered when state-wide regulations are imposed.

WATERSHED AND PROJECT PLANNING

The Recommendations to the State legislature pursuant to California Water Code 10631.7 on landscape water use and efficiency measures are all steps in the right direction in addressing the need to curtail the massive dependence on potable water for irrigating ornamental landscapes throughout the State. The County however, has substantial concerns with the

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significant financial impacts and unfunded mandates these Recommendations propose on our local government. Many of these Recommendations will require a substantial amount of staff time in continually updating local ordinances, policies, and forms throughout the twenty (20) year lifespan of this effort if approved as such by the State. These continual updates proposed by the ITP will also require additional staff time in processing these procedures, conducting public reviews and hearings, and creating new fee schedules for applicants and property owners affected by these regulations. The potential need to hire additional staff to facilitate the processing of an increase in applications, the additional inspection time to verify compliance, the enforcement of these regulations, and the additional tracking and reporting to the State is of concern as well.

Coordination between the Recommendations by the ITP and competing bills currently in the state legislature need to be resolved to prevent duplication of effort by local agencies trying to implement state law. Assembly Bill 2525 (AB2525) (Water-efficient landscaping) proposes the creation of the California Water Efficient Landscape Program that would encourage local agencies and water purveyors to use economic incentives that promote the efficient use of water, promote the benefits of consistent landscape ordinances, and support and enhance turf replacement. AB 2525 would also create the Water Efficient Landscape Fund in the State Treasury; however, these funds would not be made available to local agencies to assist in running the state-mandated regulations. Senate Bill 1340 (Water Conservation in Landscaping Act) also competes with Recommendation #2 in Section 7 of the ITP Report in requiring a permit for the installation, expansion, or replacement of specified automatic irrigation systems for a landscape project.

There is competition between the Recommendations in timing for the need to update and amend the Water Conservation in Landscaping Act (sections 65591-65599) throughout the life of the 20-year effort to reduce potable water use on urban landscapes statewide by 50 percent from current levels. The County would suggest that these updates be coordinated as a whole and be one of the first items to be addressed in setting the timeframe for future updates to the MWEL, industry standards, improvements to data collection methods, and on-going tracking of information provided. Coordination between the MWEL and CALGreen needs to be specifically defined as to how it relates to single-family and multi-family residential landscape irrigation. Coordination between continual updates to the MWEL needs to be established with the potential for water suppliers to create their own set of conflicting regulations and how that will impact property owners required to have landscape review and approval for new construction permits through a local agency and those of a water district.

The County would ask that the State consider the outcome of these Recommendations and impact in driving up the cost of construction within the State and the cost/benefit of these. Changes proposed with home inspections, plant labeling, connection charges with water suppliers, certification of professionals and the proposed upgrades to the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) and the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) will all be passed on to the development community in California if no source of funding is provided by the State. All these Recommendations identified within the ITP report are extensive and quite costly. Without a clear approach to funding or providing for these research based outcomes within the State's annual budgets through the year 2035, most Recommendations will be unattainable in their current format. Funding or assistance at the

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local level needs to be built into the equation in order for these Recommendations to be successful in conserving outdoor water use relating to ornamental landscaping.

VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM

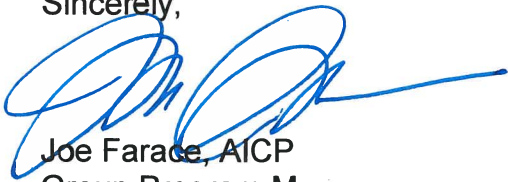
The County of San Diego Vector Control Program (VCP) is responsible for the protection of public health through the surveillance and control of mosquitoes that are vectors for human disease including West Nile virus (WNV).

The VCP respectfully requests that any recommendations put forth for policies and practices to reduce landscape water use consider impacts arising from potential mosquito breeding sources and includes language that seeks to minimize those impacts. These potential mosquito breeding sources include but are not limited to rainwater cisterns, dry streambeds, bio-swales and rain gardens. Rainwater cisterns should be outfitted with a device to prevent mosquito breeding. Any area that is capable of accumulating and holding at least ½ inch of water for more than 96 hours can support mosquito breeding and development.

For your information, the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance for Vectors can be accessed at http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/docs/vector_guidelines.pdf and the California Department of Public Health Best Management Practices for Mosquito Control in California is available at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Documents/BMPforMosquitoControl07-12.pdf>

The County of San Diego appreciates the opportunity to provide the State with comments on the ITP and hopes that our suggestions and concerns can be accommodated for in future revisions. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Danny Serrano, Planner, at (858) 694- 3680, or via email at Daniel.Serrano@sdcounty.ca.gov

Sincerely,



Joe Farace, AICP
Group Program Manager
Advance Planning Division
Planning & Development Services

e-mail cc:

Michael De La Rosa, Policy Advisor, Board of Supervisors, District 1
Adam Wilson, Policy Advisor, Board of Supervisors, District 2
Keith Corry, Policy Advisor, Board of Supervisors, District 3
Melanie Wilson, Board of Supervisors, District 4

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Chris Livoni, Policy Advisor, Board of Supervisors, District 5

Conor McGee, CAO Staff Officer, LUEG

David Kahler, County Landscape Architect, Planning & Development Services

Stephanie Gaines, Watershed Protection Program, Department of Public Works

Tom Bosworth, County Counsel

Eric Lardy, Land Use/Environmental Planning Manager, Planning & Development Services

Mary Wells Bennett, Administrative Analyst, Department of Environmental Health